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Office of University
Communications

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Daniel Rushing ('16) Strengthens Ministry Skills, Prepares for Next Step

In one visit to the School of Divinity at Gardner-Webb University, all the questions Daniel Rushing ('16) had about going back to school were answered.

“The School of Divinity offered classes that fit the schedule of someone already in active ministry and the value was unbelievable,” Rushing explained. “I was impressed with the distinguished faculty and the campus.”

Later, he realized the benefits of being a divinity student at Gardner-Webb went beyond the tangibles. “The School of Divinity has been both a family and a church to me,” he observed. “During my time here, I went through a major transition in my ministry and experienced the deaths of both my grandmothers and a close friend. Through one of the toughest years of my life, the students and faculty rallied around my family and me, prayed for us, encouraged us, and made sure our needs were met. That is something I will never forget.”

Rushing lives in Mount Holly, N.C., with his wife and two daughters. On sabbatical from pastoral ministry, he is an intern with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) of North Carolina. As part of CBF’s Racial Reconciliation Initiative, he leads weekly conversations about racial justice in churches, communities, and on the GWU campus. He also preaches and teaches as a guest speaker for churches on a regular basis.

Rushing had two goals when he entered the School of Divinity: He wanted to prepare for doctoral work and desired training to strengthen his ministry skills.

“The Master of Divinity in Pastoral Studies was the most flexible program, and required two courses each in Greek and Hebrew,” he assessed. “It is rare to find schools that still require languages for one to earn a Master of Divinity, which is another reason I believe the Gardner-Webb School of Divinity is one of the most impressive schools out there. My program gave me the chance to learn biblical languages, take extra electives, be mentored by spiritual leaders, and to be trained in local church ministry. I am a better pastor, better caregiver, better parent, and better man because of my education here.”

In areas related to church ministry, Rushing learned how to manage his time, work with volunteers, counsel families, manage church budgets, preach more effectively and handle many other day-to-day tasks of a pastor. He also appreciated being able to learn from and connect with the diverse student body and faculty. He valued every class in the program and found all the instructors to be top-notch.

“Throughout my time, though, I have cherished the classes and memories I shared with Dr. Cal Robertson,” Rushing commented. “His style of teaching resonated with me in a way that few others have. I came here with an intense desire to study the New Testament. He showed me how important Old Testament studies are to understanding Jesus and to framing a theological worldview. He is a true gift to theological education.”

Gardner-Webb also lives up to its Christian heritage. “It doesn’t mean a lot unless you can actually see the community act like Christians,” he affirmed. “I have seen it firsthand. At Gardner-Webb, it means peers and professors will pray for you, love you, and be there for you. In my experience, Gardner-Webb is more than a school, or even a community; it is a family.”